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Writer Paul Kingsnorth, baptized in the Romanian Orthodox Church, says he feels like arriving home



Paul Kingsnorth, one of the most important English writers alive, was baptized as a Christian Orthodox at the Romanian Monastery in Shannonbridge, Ireland. “As a Western newcomer to Orthodoxy, I have a lifetime’s learning journey ahead of me, but I already feel like I have arrived home,” said the writer.

“I first discovered Christian Orthodoxy four years ago when I walked into a small church in Bucharest. That powerful experience stayed with me, but I could not have known that it would lead me on a journey that would lead to me becoming a member of the Romanian church,” Paul Kingsnorth told Basilica.ro.

He was baptized on the Epiphany day by his spiritual advisor, Father Tudor Ghiță, the parish priest of the Romanian community in Galway.

“I felt both joyful and peaceful afterwards... and cold! But a stronger sense that I had arrived somewhere I was meant to be. My receipt into the church has been a great privilege, and the [Romanian] community here in Ireland has been so welcoming to me and my family,” confessed the writer.



Father Tudor Ghiță told he never tried to convert the writer. They met at the Romanian Orthodox Monastery of Shannonbridge, Ireland, and had some long talks.

“He was determined to enter Orthodoxy, but I advised him to moderate his enthusiasm and not to expect to see angels flying through the church,” said the Romanian parish priest of Galway.

He wanted to make the writer understand that being a Christian is permanent work and the joy you feel is supposed to be one of a spiritual nature.

“He is an obedient spiritual son,” Father Tudor Ghiță added. “He observes the fasting days, reads the recommended prayers and makes full prostrations.”

Even though he had many spiritual searches, Paul Kingsnorth had never been baptized in another Christian denomination. His previous searches took him towards Oriental religions and neopaganism.

“In 2020, as the world was turned upside down, so was I. Unexpectedly, and initially against my will, I found myself being pulled determinedly towards Christianity,” he recounted. “I started the year as an eclectic eco-pagan with a long-held, unformed ache in my heart, and ended it a practicing Christian.”

Then the ache was “gone and replaced by the thing that, all along, I turned out to have been looking for,” he added.

“In January 2021 I was baptised and received into the Eastern Orthodox Church. I don’t know where the path leads from here, but at last I know how to walk it.”

Call cards



Paul Kingsnorth (photo above, after the baptism) is 49 and has lived for several years in the rural parts of Galway, Ireland. He runs a family farm which he works by using traditional methods, such as cutting hay with a scythe, just like Romanian peasants did formerly.

- He wrote visionary fiction books and essays on the environment. Between 2009 and 2017, he established an environmental activism project entitled Dark Mountain. But he says he has never been a Marxist materialist, like many

other members of this movement.

- “I have never been a scientific materialist. My suspicion that there is more to the world than modernity will allow for has informed my sensibility since I was a child, and was the backdrop to all my environmental activism and writing,” he wrote.
- Conservative writer Rod Dreher describes him as “one of the most talented and visionary writers of our time”.
- Journalist Aris Roussinos calls him a “profoundly religious” author and “England’s greatest living writer”.



Părintele Paroh Tudor Ghiță (photo above) is from Câmpulung Moldovenesc, in northeastern Romania, where he ordered the mobile iconostasis sculpted in linden-tree wood for the “St Nicholas and St Brigitte of Kildare” Church in Galway. He can install it anywhere in 20 minutes.

He initially prepared for exact sciences, not for Theology. "But God knows His works," he says.

He is shepherding Ireland's biggest Romanian Orthodox around the feast of Epiphany, he can drive over 1,500 miles.

The Romanian parish priest is grateful to the representatives of the Anglican Church in Galway, who offered a space for religious offices to the Romanian Orthodox community.

Contact

The Orthodox Church in Galway

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The Orthodox Monastery in Shannonbridge

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